Key Terms

American Psychological Association professional organization representing psychologists in the United States

behaviorism focus on observing and controlling behavior

biopsychology study of how biology influences behavior

biopsychosocial model perspective that asserts that biology, psychology, and social factors interact to determine an individual's health

clinical psychology area of psychology that focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders and other problematic patterns of behavior

cognitive psychology study of cognitions, or thoughts, and their relationship to experiences and actions

counseling psychology area of psychology that focuses on improving emotional, social, vocational, and other aspects of the lives of psychologically healthy individuals

developmental psychology scientific study of development across a lifespan

dissertation long research paper about research that was conducted as a part of the candidate's doctoral training

empirical method method for acquiring knowledge based on observation, including experimentation, rather than a method based only on forms of logical argument or previous authorities

forensic psychology area of psychology that applies the science and practice of psychology to issues within and related to the justice system

functionalism focused on how mental activities helped an organism adapt to its environment

humanism perspective within psychology that emphasizes the potential for good that is innate to all humans

introspection process by which someone examines their own conscious experience in an attempt to break it into its component parts

ology suffix that denotes "scientific study of"

PhD (doctor of philosophy) doctoral degree conferred in many disciplinary perspectives housed in a traditional college of liberal arts and sciences

PsyD (doctor of psychology) doctoral degree that places less emphasis on research-oriented skills and focuses more on application of psychological principles in the clinical context

personality psychology study of patterns of thoughts and behaviors that make each individual unique

personality trait consistent pattern of thought and behavior

postdoctoral training program allows young scientists to further develop their research programs and broaden their research skills under the supervision of other professionals in the field

psyche Greek word for soul

psychoanalytic theory focus on the role of the unconscious in affecting conscious behavior

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psychology scientific study of the mind and behavior

sport and exercise psychology area of psychology that focuses on the interactions between mental and emotional factors and physical performance in sports, exercise, and other activities

structuralism understanding the conscious experience through introspection

Summary

1.1 What Is Psychology?

Psychology derives from the roots *psyche* (meaning soul) and *–ology* (meaning scientific study of). Thus, psychology is defined as the scientific study of mind and behavior. Students of psychology develop critical thinking skills, become familiar with the scientific method, and recognize the complexity of behavior.

1.2 History of Psychology

Before the time of Wundt and James, questions about the mind were considered by philosophers. However, both Wundt and James helped create psychology as a distinct scientific discipline. Wundt was a structuralist, which meant he believed that our cognitive experience was best understood by breaking that experience into its component parts. He thought this was best accomplished by introspection.

William James was the first American psychologist, and he was a proponent of functionalism. This particular perspective focused on how mental activities served as adaptive responses to an organism's environment. Like Wundt, James also relied on introspection; however, his research approach also incorporated more objective measures as well.

Sigmund Freud believed that understanding the unconscious mind was absolutely critical to understand conscious behavior. This was especially true for individuals that he saw who suffered from various hysterias and neuroses. Freud relied on dream analysis, slips of the tongue, and free association as means to access the unconscious. Psychoanalytic theory remained a dominant force in clinical psychology for several decades.

Gestalt psychology was very influential in Europe. Gestalt psychology takes a holistic view of an individual and his experiences. As the Nazis came to power in Germany, Wertheimer, Koffka, and Köhler immigrated to the United States. Although they left their laboratories and their research behind, they did introduce America to Gestalt ideas. Some of the principles of Gestalt psychology are still very influential in the study of sensation and perception.

One of the most influential schools of thought within psychology's history was behaviorism. Behaviorism focused on making psychology an objective science by studying overt behavior and deemphasizing the importance of unobservable mental processes. John Watson is often considered the father of behaviorism, and B. F. Skinner's contributions to our understanding of principles of operant conditioning cannot be underestimated.

As behaviorism and psychoanalytic theory took hold of so many aspects of psychology, some began to become dissatisfied with psychology's picture of human nature. Thus, a humanistic movement within psychology began to take hold. Humanism focuses on the potential of all people for good. Both Maslow and Rogers were influential in shaping humanistic psychology.

During the 1950s, the landscape of psychology began to change. A science of behavior began to shift back to its roots of focus on mental processes. The emergence of neuroscience and computer science aided this transition. Ultimately, the cognitive revolution took hold, and people came to realize that cognition was crucial to a true appreciation and understanding of behavior.

1.3 Contemporary Psychology

Psychology is a diverse discipline that is made up of several major subdivisions with unique perspectives. Biological psychology involves the study of the biological bases of behavior. Sensation and perception

refer to the area of psychology that is focused on how information from our sensory modalities is received, and how this information is transformed into our perceptual experiences of the world around us. Cognitive psychology is concerned with the relationship that exists between thought and behavior, and developmental psychologists study the physical and cognitive changes that occur throughout one's lifespan. Personality psychology focuses on individuals' unique patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion. Industrial and organizational psychology, health psychology, sport and exercise psychology, forensic psychology, and clinical psychology are all considered applied areas of psychology. Industrial and organizational psychologists apply psychological concepts to I-O settings. Health psychologists look for ways to help people live healthier lives, and clinical psychology involves the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders and other problematic behavioral patterns. Sport and exercise psychologists study the interactions between thoughts, emotions, and physical performance in sports, exercise, and other activities. Forensic psychologists carry out activities related to psychology in association with the justice system.

1.4 Careers in Psychology

Generally, academic careers in psychology require doctoral degrees. However, there are a number of nonacademic career options for people who have master's degrees in psychology. While people with bachelor's degrees in psychology have more limited psychology-related career options, the skills acquired as a function of an undergraduate education in psychology are useful in a variety of work contexts.

Review Questions

1. Which of the following was mentioned as a skill to which psychology students would be exposed?

a. critical thinking
b. use of the scientific method
c. critical evaluation of sources of information
d. all of the above

2. *Psyche* is a Greek word meaning _____.

a. essence
b. soul
c. behavior
d. love

3. Before psychology became a recognized academic discipline, matters of the mind were undertaken by those in _____.

a. biology
b. chemistry
c. philosophy
d. physics

4. In the scientific method, a hypothesis is a(n) _____.

a. observation
b. measurement
c. test
d. proposed explanation

5. Based on your reading, which theorist would have been most likely to agree with this statement: Perceptual phenomena are best understood as a combination of their components.

a. William James
b. Max Wertheimer
c. Carl Rogers
d. Noam Chomsky

6. _____ is most well-known for proposing his hierarchy of needs.

a. Noam Chomsky
b. Carl Rogers
c. Abraham Maslow
d. Sigmund Freud

7. Rogers believed that providing genuineness, empathy, and _____ in the therapeutic environment for his clients was critical to their being able to deal with their problems.

a. structuralism
b. functionalism
c. Gestalt
d. unconditional positive regard

8. The operant conditioning chamber (aka _____ box) is a device used to study the principles of operant conditioning.

a. Skinner

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b. Watson
c. James
d. Koffka

9. A researcher interested in how changes in the cells of the hippocampus (a structure in the brain related to learning and memory) are related to memory formation would be most likely to identify as a(n) _____ psychologist.
a. biological
b. health
c. clinical
d. social

10. An individual's consistent pattern of thought and behavior is known as a(n) _____.
a. psychosexual stage
b. object permanence
c. personality
d. perception

11. In Milgram's controversial study on obedience, nearly _____ of the participants were willing to administer what appeared to be lethal electrical shocks to another person because they were told to do so by an authority figure.
a. 1/3
b. 2/3
c. 3/4
d. 4/5

12. A researcher interested in what factors make an employee best suited for a given job would most likely identify as a(n) _____ psychologist.
a. personality
b. clinical
c. social
d. I-O

13. If someone wanted to become a psychology professor at a 4-year college, then s/he would probably need a _____ degree in psychology.
a. bachelor of science
b. bachelor of art
c. master's
d. PhD

14. The _____ places less emphasis on research and more emphasis on application of therapeutic skills.
a. PhD
b. PsyD
c. postdoctoral training program
d. dissertation

15. Which of the following degrees would be the minimum required to teach psychology courses in high school?
a. PhD
b. PsyD
c. master's degree
d. bachelor's degree

16. One would need at least a(n) _____ degree to serve as a school psychologist.
a. associate's
b. bachelor's
c. master's
d. doctoral

Critical Thinking Questions

17. Why do you think psychology courses like this one are often requirements of so many different programs of study?

18. Why do you think many people might be skeptical about psychology being a science?

19. How did the object of study in psychology change over the history of the field since the 19th century?

20. In part, what aspect of psychology was the behaviorist approach to psychology a reaction to?

21. Given the incredible diversity among the various areas of psychology that were described in this section, how do they all fit together?

22. What are the potential ethical concerns associated with Milgram's research on obedience?

23. Why is an undergraduate education in psychology so helpful in a number of different lines of work?

24. Other than a potentially greater salary, what would be the reasons an individual would continue on to get a graduate degree in psychology?

Personal Application Questions

25. Why are you taking this course? What do you hope to learn about during this course?

26. Freud is probably one of the most well-known historical figures in psychology. Where have you encountered references to Freud or his ideas about the role that the unconscious mind plays in determining conscious behavior?

27. Now that you've been briefly introduced to some of the major areas within psychology, which are you most interested in learning more about? Why?

28. Which of the career options described in this section is most appealing to you?

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